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ABSTRACT

Although parental involvement is recommended at all levels of schooling, involvement of parents at the secondary level has not been well defined in the literature. This paper presents findings of a case study that examined three high schools with varying levels of parental involvement--the first, a large high school with a predominantly working class student body; the second, a small, innercity magnet school; and the third, a medium-sized suburban school. Research methods included interviews with a total of 100 students, parents, teachers, and administrators; an analysis of unobtrusive data; and informal interviews with school staff. Epstein's (1987) typology of parent involvement is used to compare the combined views of interview respondents regarding appropriate roles for parental involvement in high schools. Findings indicate that school climate as it related to parental involvement had more influence on the views of interview respondents than did any other factor. Teens unanimously said that parents should be involved in their education. Some implications are as follows: (1) parental involvement programs are as desirable at the high school level as the elementary level; (2) parents need to be educated about the benefits of involvement; (3) programs should provide parents with a variety of ways to participate; (4) programs should fit the individual school's needs; and (5) involved parents often contribute to school improvement efforts. Two figures are included. (Contains 105 references.) (LMI)

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PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN HIGH SCHOOLS

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PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN HIGH SCHOOLS

Introduction

In his "State of American Education" address on February 15, 1994, Education Secretary Richard Riley urged teachers and family members to become more involved in working together to help students. He noted that "parents, who feel a certain respect for the work of teachers, seem lost in the process of education reform." At the same time, "teachers feel overwhelmed, frustrated and perplexed that parents are not hooked into the lives of their children" (p. 8). The paradox here simply stated is that parents feel left out of the educational process at the very time that teachers wish that parents would be more involved.

These quotes suggest two of the difficulties in increasing parental involvement. First, there are many different ways that parents can be involved. Riley's statements indicate two different types, and the parents and the teachers are not talking about increasing the same types of involvement. And secondly, teachers and parents are each looking for the other to take the initiative to increase parental involvement.

Most parents and teachers would agree that parental involvement decreases at the high school level. To extend the call for increased parental involvement to high school poses additional unknowns. Most of the research and published reports on parental involvement have involved elementary school parents. We do not know if high school parents' and teachers' views concerning parental involvement correspond to elementary parents' and teachers' views, how the roles parents play in the education of their child changes when the child is in high school, if high school parents want to be involved, and if parental involvement at the high school level will have the same benefits that have been ascribed to parental involvement at the elementary level. It is often suggested that high school students discourage their parents from being involved, but we really do not know what the views of these teenagers are on the subject of parental involvement. This research study considers all of these unknowns.

Review of Related Literature

This literature review summarizes literature recently published concerning the calls for parental involvement in schools, the advantages of parental involvement; the views of teachers, administrators and parents concerning parental involvement; the components suggested for parental involvement programs; classifications of different kinds of parental involvement; and the parental involvement literature specifically pertaining to high schools.

Calls for Parental Involvement in Schools

Education Secretary Richard Riley's February 15 speech calling for inclusion of parents as participants is only one example of the attention being given to parental involvement in education. A National Governors' Association report issued in 1986 by Lamar Alexander also called for more parental involvement (Brosnan, 1991, January 5). Parental involvement has

been included as a part of school improvement efforts proposed by business and industry leaders (Pipho, 1991). When parents of low income and/or minority children perceive the failure of the schools for their children, they have sometimes sought to have more say in the governing of their schools (Ruestow, 1992, April; Snider, 1990, Nov. 21 a & c). Federally funded compensatory education programs control these programs with regulations which mandate the inclusion of parents (Olmstead & Rubin, 1983b; Oyemade, Washington, & Gullo, 1989; Staff of the Center on Families, Communities, Schools and Children's Learning Report, 1992, May; Walberg & Wallace, 1992, April). Preschool parenting programs sponsored by states and community groups all over the country seek to help parents better prepare their children for school (Cohen, 1990, May 9a). Movements underway in several communities to consolidate the efforts of the helping agencies are including schools so that efforts are more focused and less fragmented (Ascher, 1988; Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Comer, 1987; Gotts & Purnell, 1987b; Hobbs, et al 1984; Reed & Sautter, 1990; and Wilson & Corcoran, 1988). Many schools themselves are undergoing changes that result in a restructuring of the roles played by all the shareholders. These projects also target the underachieving, at-risk student, and the involvement between parents and the school is a partnership. Examples of these types of programs are James Comer's School Development Program at Yale University's Child Study Center (1986; 1988a; 1988, Nov. 30; Comer, Haynes, & Hamilton-Lee, 1987-88; Haynes, Comer, & Hamilton-Lee, 1989), Don Davies' Schools Reaching Out Project sponsored by the Institute for Responsive Education of Boston (1990, April; 1991; 1992, April; Krasnow, 1990), and Henry Levin's Accelerated Schools Program in California (1987; 1992, April; Seeley, 1989).

Advantages and Benefits of Parental Involvement Programs

Swap (1990) explains that the partnership between school and home is needed to bridge the gap between home and school especially when the discontinuities are significant in order to reduce conflict for children, reinforce learning, and ease the transition between the two environments. Otherwise, children may fail to "find confirmation of their construction of meaning in the world" (p. 11) and find themselves unable to process new information. Lightfoot (1978) agrees. She says that "(t)he greater the difference between family and community culture and school norms, the greater the need for parents and teachers to work hard at knowing one another" (p. 189).

Following are some of the numerous positive changes in students, parents, teachers, and school climate attributed to or associated with parental involvement by researchers and educators.

Students.

- Discipline problems diminish (Comer, 1988a; Cotton & Wikelund, 1989; Epstein, 1982, March; Oyemade, Washington, & Gullo, 1989).
- Students develop more positive attitudes toward learning, school, and homework and have a higher rate of homework completion (Bauch, 1989; Bouie, Tucker, Freeman, & Howard, 1987; Chapman, 1991; Cotton & Wikelund, 1989; Epstein, 1982 March, 1987a, 1990; Gotts & Purnell, 1986; Hart, 1988; Rasinski & Fredericks, 1989a; Rich, 1987b).
- Achievement increases (Bauch, 1989; Bouie, Tucker, Freeman, & Howard, 1987; Cawelti, 1990; Chrispeels, 1991; Cohen, 1990, May 9c; Comer, 1988a; Cotton & Wikelund, 1989; Epstein, 1987a, 1990; Gotts & Purnell, 1986; Hart, 1988; Henderson, Marburger, & Ooms, 1986; Herman & Yeh, 1983; Keith, 1987; Keith, Keith, Bickley, & Singh, 1992, April; Olmsted & Rubin, 1983a, 1983b; Oyemade, Washington, & Gullo, 1989; Rasinski & Fredericks, 1989a; Swap, 1990).
- Attendance of students improves (Bauch, 1989; Comer, 1988a; Olmsted & Rubin, 1983b).

- Children have higher aspirations (Cotton & Wikelund, 1989; Epstein, 1987a; McDill, Rigsby, & Myers 1969 [cited in Henderson, 1987]).

Parents.

- Parents learn to appreciate the efforts and trust the judgment of teachers (Epstein, 1984, 1986; Gotts & Purnell, 1986).
- Parents evaluate teachers and schools more favorably (Epstein, 1984, 1985, 1990; Hart, 1988; Herman & Yeh, 1983; Rich, 1987b).
- Both parents and teachers show more interest in the child, have higher expectations, and feel better equipped to help the child succeed (Cohen, 1990, May 9c; Comer, 1986; Cotton & Wikelund, 1989; Rasinski & Fredericks, 1989a; Rich, 1987b).
- Parents have a feeling of ownership, belonging, and inclusion concerning the school (Bauch, 1989; Comer, 1986).
- Parents become advocates for needed school improvements and are generally more supportive of the efforts of teachers and schools (Friesen & Huff, 1990; Hester, 1989; Rich, 1987b; Walker, 1991, March 20; Wallat & Goldman, 1979).
- Parents gain improved self-concept (Cotton & Wikelund, 1989; Rich, 1987a).
- Parent education programs contribute to the stability of the home and the parenting skills and self-esteem of the parents by focusing on adult education, training, counseling, employment programs, and help with bureaucratic hurdles in services such as speech therapy, counseling, medicine, food, and shelter (Cohen, 1990, May 9a; Olmsted & Rubin, 1983b; Oyemade, Washington, & Gullo, 1989).

Teachers.

- Teachers become aware of the parents' perspectives and do less stereotyping of students and their parents (Comer, 1988a; Cotton & Wikelund, 1989; Epstein, 1987a, 1990, 1991).
- Teachers give more individualized attention to and have higher expectations for their students (Epstein, 1990; Scott-Jones, 1988).
- Teachers have higher feelings of efficacy and a more positive teaching experience (Epstein, 1982 March, 1990, 1991; Hoover-Dempsey, Bassler, & Brissie, 1987; Olson, 1990, June 13; Wikelund, 1990).

School Climate.

- Parents provide knowledge about the child not available in any other way to school personnel (Cattermole & Robinson, 1985; Comer, 1986; Scott-Jones, 1988).
- Two-way communication and cooperation narrows the gap of differences between home and school. The resulting changes in the home and the school make efforts to help the child succeed more consistent (Comer, 1986; Epstein, 1982 March, 1990; Scott-Jones, 1988; Swap, 1990).
- By contributing to these changes in students, parents, and teachers, parental involvement enhances school climate and helps schools improve (Cattermole & Robinson, 1985; Comer, 1986; Daresh, 1986; Haynes, Comer, & Hamilton-Lee, 1989; Kershaw et al. 1990).

Components Suggested for Parental Involvement Programs

Recommendations made for successful parental involvement programs frequently include the following:

- There should be support from teachers, administrators, and central office for seeing parents and schools as partners in the education and socialization of children (Chavkin & Williams, 1987; Chrispeels, 1991; Della-Dora, 1979; Henderson, Marburger, & Ooms, 1986; New York State School Boards Association, 1987);
- Two-way communications that are frequent, open, and informative should be encouraged between home and school (Gotts & Purnell, 1986, 1987b; Hester, 1989; Lombana, 1983);
- Goals for parental involvement, as well as its development and leadership, should be site specific (Epstein, 1988; Lombana, 1983; McAfee, 1987; Ware, Olmsted, & Newell, 1976). Conducting a needs assessment can help to fit the parental involvement program to the site (Gotts & Purnell, 1986; Lombana, 1983; Mahon, 1991; McAfee, 1987; Quinby, 1985; Sparling & Lowman, 1983; Swap, 1990; Ware, Olmsted, & Newell, 1976);
- Parental involvement should be a funded, integral, long term part of the school program rather than an add-on or a public relations ploy (Chavkin & Williams, 1987; Chrispeels, 1991; Epstein, 1991; Fredericks, no date given; Hart, 1988; Henderson, 1987; Krasnow, 1990; Rich, 1987a);
- All parents should be encouraged to participate (Epstein, 1987a, 1991; Fredericks, no date given; Hart, 1988; Henderson, Marburger, & Ooms, 1986; Krasnow 1990; Rich, 1987a);
- Teachers should be provided with training in parental involvement (Chavkin & Williams, 1987, 1988; Chrispeels, 1991; Cotton & Wikelund, 1989; Gotts & Purnell, 1986; Krasnow 1990; Rich, 1987a; Williams & Chavkin, 1989);
- A comprehensive range of options for parental involvement should be provided (Chavkin & Williams, 1987; Chrispeels, 1991; Cotton & Wikelund, 1989; Della-Dora, 1979; Fredericks, no date given; Henderson, 1987; New York State School Boards Association, 1987);
- Parental involvement efforts should be documented and evaluated (Cohen, 1990, May 9a; Epstein, 1991; Krasnow 1990; New York State School Boards Association, 1987; Olmsted, Ware, & Newell, 1976; Rich, 1987a; Wallat & Goldman, 1979; Williams & Chavkin, 1989); and
- Parental involvement should be planned across all the years the child is in school (Chrispeels, 1991; Cotton & Wikelund, 1989; Epstein, 1988, 1991; Hart, 1988; Henderson, 1987; Rich, 1987a).

It is from these kinds of comprehensive long range parental involvement processes that the benefits attributed to parental involvement derive.

Views of Teachers, Administrators, and Parents

Parents, teachers, administrators, and the community have differing views of what constitutes parental involvement (Chavkin & Williams, 1987; Chrispeels, 1991; Henderson, Marburger, & Ooms, 1986; Staff, Harvard Education Letter, 1988, November/December b).

Teachers and Administrators

Polls show that teachers advocate more parental involvement in general. Lack of parental interest and support is seen by 34% of teachers as the biggest problem facing public schools (Bradley, 1989, June 14 reporting results of a Gallup poll). In a study by Joyce Epstein and Susan Dauber (1989), teachers viewed their own individual support for parental involvement

as stronger than that of their colleagues, and much stronger than that of the parents of their students.

Most teachers and administrators would support parents assisting at the school (Epstein, 1986), but

> some teachers and principals are uncomfortable with parents in the classroom or school. Studies indicate that the majority of teachers and principals see the ideal relationship with parents as one in which parents support teacher practices and school in general [and] carry out requests but do not interfere with plans and decisions (Ost, 1988, p. 168).

Although educators want parental support, they do not welcome the questioning of their methods (Lombana, 1983). Henderson, Marburger, and Ooms (1986) talk about the "official rhetoric" being in favor of parental involvement, but that teachers are more hesitant when they remember encounters in which parents insisted on banning certain books from the library or the classroom or challenged a teacher's classroom practices. Teachers recall parent-teacher conferences or school open houses which were sometimes useful and constructive and other times were "boring rituals or even quite hostile encounters" (p. 2).

Low expectations and negative attitudes of some teachers toward both low income students and their parents also inhibit the development of initiatives to involve parents (Chrispeels, 1991). The viewpoint of many teachers would be that parents are not laying the foundation for their children to succeed in school (Davies, 1988; Hughes, Burgess, & Moxon, 1991). These teachers feel the prognosis of the children's educational success is poor because their families are deficient and the parents are uninterested and hard to reach.

Parents

Both teachers and parents generally value educational attainment, but may not work together toward that goal (Scott-Jones, 1988). Although 40% of teachers reported they have parents helping in their classrooms, most parents cannot or do not become involved in this way (Epstein, 1984). Over 95% of the teachers reported that they communicated with parents, but one third of parents reported not having a conference with the teacher during the year, and two thirds never talked with the teacher by phone. Epstein concluded that "most parents are not involved in deep, detailed, or frequent communications with teachers about their child's program or progress" (p. 124). Over 70% of parents are never involved in any activity of assisting the teacher or staff at the school. Only about 4% were highly active at the school (Epstein, 1987a). More than one third of the parents in Leitch and Tangri's study (1988) said they had never been asked to do anything by the school, and many of those reported they would like to be involved.

Both local and national surveys have shown that parents feel education is important, want to stay informed of their child's progress in school, and want to be more involved in schools (Gotts & Purnell, 1986). What kinds of involvement in the education of their children do parents want? Comer (in Bauch, 1989) suggests that

> first, they want to know what is going on in school and how their child is doing. Second, they want to know how the 'system' works and how they can be a part of it. Third, they want to know what they can do with their child at home to help him or her achieve in school (pp. 9-10).

Leitch and Tangri (1988) include parents' need to be informed about the attendance of their child. Gotts and Purnell (1985) mention communication as being of special interest to parents of secondary students regarding deficiencies, homework, scheduling, credits earned and needed, post-secondary plans, student behavior, and testing or screening for student placement. Teachers and parents alike feel they have little influence on school boards, city councils, and larger "influential systems." They tend to view these higher authorities negatively (Leitch & Tangri, 1988).

The views of parents and teachers may differ from school to school. A study by Schlessman-Frost (1992, April) reported that parents at elementary schools in three diverse settings had differing opinions as to the most important roles for parents in the education of

their children. Chavkin and Williams (1987) found over 75% of parents thought it would be appropriate for parents to be involved in decision-making concerning curriculum and materials, budget, and hiring and firing of school personnel. This is not to say that they personally want to be involved in this way. The parents' view of the appropriateness of parents being involved in decision-making was not shared by administrators who would overwhelmingly limit parental involvement to such activities as home tutoring and attending school events.

Most parents help their children at home sometimes, but are unsure about how best to help (Epstein, 1990). Epstein believes that all parents want to be informed by teachers and schools as to how to help children at home and what children are expected to learn. Parents who receive help from teachers on how to help at home spend more time helping their children than do other parents (Dauber & Epstein, 1989). Utilizing parents as home tutors has strong support among educators as a kind of parental involvement and also shows the biggest link to student achievement (Rich, 1987b; Staff of Harvard Education Letter, 1988, November/December b). Rich (1987b) states that most parents, at least at the elementary level, prefer to be involved in ways which benefit their children directly.

Changing Needs in High Schools

Far more examples of parental involvement exist at the preschool and early elementary level than at the secondary level. Research concerning parental involvement in general has focused largely on programs for parents of younger children, the demographic characteristics of the parents who take the initiative in being involved in the education of their children, the benefits which accrue to those children, and documentation of demographic factors associated with decreased parental involvement such as parental involvement decreasing as the student gets older. Research on parental involvement in high schools has tended to focus on reasons why parents are less involved. As the child advances through the schools, parents and teachers alike initiate fewer contacts with each other. Both parents and teachers realize the adolescent need for structure as well as independence, but each looks to the other for the provision of structure with parents noting a lack of discipline and limited expectations at school and teachers perceiving too much permissiveness at home (Leitch & Tangri, 1988). The teenager becomes more independent and may discourage the parent from visible presence at the school. Teens are often reluctant to be seen with their parents, especially if the situation is one in which the parents obviously have charge or control (Gotts & Purnell, 1985).

The organization of schools also contributes to the withdrawal of parents from secondary school programs. Elementary teachers are responsible for fewer total children and can more easily develop a rapport with the parents of the children in their room. Secondary schools are usually farther from the neighborhood and therefore less familiar to the family (although this reason is discounted as a factor by parents in the 1982 Stallworth and Williams study.) Instead of one teacher, the child has many. Subject areas are beyond many parents (Stallworth & Williams, 1982), and the size of the school may also intimidate parents. In a study by Dornbusch and Ritter (1988), 80% of teachers agreed that many parents feel uncomfortable or out of place at school.

Joyce Epstein's work has focused instead on differences in the ways teachers and administrators encourage parental involvement and how these differences affect the types and amounts of parental involvement. Her research has shown that whether and to what extent parents become involved is much more dependent on the practices of the school and teacher than on family characteristics such as race, parent education, family size, and marital status (Epstein, 1990). There is some evidence that this is true for high school parents as well. In a 1982 Stallworth and Williams study, parents were asked why parents became less involved at the high school level. Three of the top six reasons given concerned less encouragement given by the secondary schools for parents to be involved. There are teachers who successfully involve secondary parents as a part of their regular teaching practice (Epstein, 1990), but "parents generally do not feel a part of their child's school program unless the school or district places special emphasis on involving parents" (Gotts & Purnell, 1986, p. 173).

Appropriate Roles for Parents of High School Students: Differing Views

The form of parental involvement most widely accepted by teachers and administrators in general has been parents volunteering to help out at the school. That role may need to be revised at the secondary level if parents are trying to minimize their physical presence in the school world of their children. The form of parental involvement having the largest impact on student achievement and one which elementary parents find highly rewarding is tutoring their own children at home. Parents and teachers alike seem unsure as to whether most parents can successfully fulfill this role in the subject areas at the secondary level (Dornbusch & Ritter, 1988; Stallworth & Williams, 1982). Monitoring school programs and the child's progress to make sure the child receives what is necessary is one role specifically suggested for secondary parents (Gotts & Purnell, 1987b; Henderson, Marburger, & Ooms, 1986; New York State School Board Association, 1987; Scott-Jones, 1988). In order for parents to be monitors, communications will have to be adequate in presenting the necessary information. In addition, relations with the school will have to be such that parents feel encouraged to fulfill this role. Parents tend not to take the initiative in contacting the school. Contacts between school and home initiated by either teachers or parents most often involve problems the child is having in school (Gotts & Purnell, 1986).

Some parents, after having been denied access to the schools and, at the same time, seeing the failure of the schools for their children, have become militant in their demands to be given a voice in school operations (Ianni, 1989, May 3; Lombana, 1983). These parents and this situation are in the minority, however. Most parents are reluctant to become involved unless strongly encouraged by the teacher and/or the school.

Educators often assume that secondary parents care less about the progress of their child because of the decrease in their physical presence at the school. Gotts and Purnell (1986) would say that involvement is better demonstrated by parents of older children through their being available to be present when needed. Parents may also be providing guidance and assistance at home which is not obvious to school personnel. If parents still desire involvement, it will probably need to be expressed in different terms and perhaps concerning different problems.

Teachers tend to blame parents for low levels of involvement at the secondary level (Epstein, 1990), and their perceptions "tend to preclude home-based forms of parental involvement, the very type of parental involvement that is reported to have the greatest positive impact on the achievement of students from low income homes" (Dornbusch & Ritter, 1988, p. 77). Dornbusch and Ritter found that 62% of teachers think they can't affect the way parents assist in school work, 39% believe parents don't have enough training to help students at the high school level, and 31% believe parents won't spend time working with their children. In the Epstein (1990) study, teachers also reported that parents are not involved and don't want to be involved, but the parents reported they are involved with their children at home and would like to have information from teachers on how to be of more help at home. Hester (1989) says that the goal of increasing parental involvement at the school is unrealistic at the secondary level, but that increasing the level of parent/student involvement at home is realistic and should be a priority. Parents care a great deal about their child's schooling and want to know how to help and support the program. They participate willingly when programs are personally rewarding and/or they can see their child's improvement (Gotts & Purnell, 1986).

Even though many teachers advocate more parental involvement, they have been reluctant to expand their teaching load by including working with parents as a part of their job. In a Dornbusch and Ritter study (1988), high school teachers reported most contact with parents of student discipline problems and with parents who initiated contact in order to help their child succeed. Teachers had significantly less contact with parents of average students, and did not desire more contact with parents of average students. Teachers would appreciate training in how to work with parents, but few have had that training in their preservice education or as a part of staff development (Gotts & Purnell, 1986). Teachers reportedly feel they have few skills in dealing with parents and that they don't know what advantages to expect from parental involvement (Leitch & Tangri, 1988; Ost, 1988). Teachers may need more information before

they can decide whether or not they are willing to encourage parental involvement and, if so, what roles to encourage parents to play.

Both parents and teachers assume that secondary school students do not want their parents to be involved with their school experience (Stallworth & Williams, 1982). The American Chicle Youth Poll in 1987 (The Roper Organization, Inc.) surveyed students ages eight through seventeen concerning their views on their families, schools, and social issues. When given a list of items which could help to improve schools, 46% of these students agreed that "more attention by parents to how kids are doing" would help (Roper, 1987, p. 69). Older youth were more likely to agree than eight to twelve year olds. "More parent involvement in school policy" was considered by 41% of youth surveyed to be a possibility for improving schools. This poll raises the question of parental roles secondary students would see as beneficial. The range of parental roles desirable or undesirable to students is one which has not been explored.

Classification of Parental Involvement According to Joyce Epstein's Typology

Joyce Epstein has proposed a typology of actual parent roles which is widely used by other researchers writing about parent involvement including those associated with the Center on Families, Communities, Schools & Children's Learning. The Center is a consortium of university researchers who have joined together to conduct research, evaluations, and policy analysis and to disseminate research, promote parental involvement in schools, and facilitate communication among these institutions about parental involvement. There are six categories of parental involvement in Epstein's typology (Epstein, 1987a; "Six types," 1992, February).

Type 1. The Basic Obligations of Parents are to provide for the students' basic physical needs and foster in students the idea that education is important and that they can succeed. Educators have called this "sending the child to school ready to learn." Although it might seem as though this type of parental involvement would be out of the hands of the school, schools can help families fulfill their obligations by providing assistance to families in their responsibilities for their children's health and safety: supervision, discipline, and guidance for children at each age level; and positive home conditions that support school learning and behavior appropriate for each grade level.

Type 2. The Basic Obligation of Schools is to keep parents informed about what is going on at the school. This information can be about the school in general or the parent's child in particular. Different forms could include phone calls, report cards, newsletters, conferences, letters, and other mechanisms. Any communication between school and home or home and school could be included in this category.

Type 3. Parental Involvement at the School can include any volunteer activities that the parent does to try to help out at the school, attending activities at the school such as band concerts and athletic events, attending general meetings at the school such as Open House or PTA, attending parent-teacher conferences, or sitting in on a class.

Type 4. Parental Involvement in Learning Activities at Home includes those activities that are coordinated and directed by the teacher, or are initiated by parents or students with or without the knowledge of the teacher. Discussions of current events or issues at the dinner table or a family outing to a cultural event are examples of parent-initiated learning activities. A student asking for help with homework is an example of a student-initiated activity. Assignments which are supposed to involve parents such as interviews or projects are example of possible teacher-initiated learning activities at home.

Type 5. Parental Involvement in Governance and Advocacy includes parents serving on a board that advises or helps to make decisions about issues at the school or making suggestions informally to administrators or teachers about school related issues. Parents also advocate when, individually or as a member of a group, they monitor the schools or take a stand on any issue that involves the school in general or their child in particular and approach teachers, counselors, administrators, a school organization, or the school board with their concerns.

Type 6. Collaboration and Exchanges with the Community includes the school working with any of the community agencies or groups to provide services to the student or the family and/or

support the child's learning.

Questions Arising from the Literature Review

Researchers and school personnel who have been a part of successful parental involvement programs and who have written about these programs are consistent in recommending that parental involvement be implemented in secondary schools as well as in elementary schools. Few parental involvement programs in secondary schools are presently in place. The literature on parental involvement in general and particularly at the high school level leaves several important questions unanswered.

1. Is there evidence that the advantages and benefits attributed to parental involvement at the elementary level hold true for parental involvement in high schools?
2. How do or should the roles parents play at the elementary level change with the increasing maturity and independence of teenagers at the high school level? Is the Epstein typology useful for categorizing parental involvement at the high school level?
3. Are the views of high school teachers, administrators, and parents concerning parent involvement different from the reported views of elementary teachers, administrators, and parents?
4. What are teenagers' views about the desirability of their parents' involvement in their schools?

Research focusing specifically on administrators', teachers', parents', and students' views concerning parental involvement in high schools could help to determine the answers to these questions. This information would be important to school personnel in planning to implement or strengthen parental involvement in high schools. Since Joyce Epstein's typology (see pages 8 and 9) is already widely used for classifying roles parents can play, it will be used as an organizer in this study also.

Methodology

Although parental involvement is recommended at all levels of schooling, involvement of parents at the secondary level has not been well defined in the literature. Roles parents can successfully and satisfyingly play, parents' desires for such involvement, students' views of their parents' involvement, and strategies schools and teachers might use to encourage parental involvement are all issues which need to be examined. Research exploring the views of high school administrators, teachers, parents, and students regarding parental involvement in high schools was used to extend our knowledge base about parental involvement to the high school level. A descriptive exploratory study was conducted to address these issues utilizing qualitative methods of data collection and data analysis.

Design, Data Sources

Data collection strategies were based on a three-school multisite study. Within each school, a site study was conducted. Semi-structured interview data, unobtrusive data, and supplemental interview data were gathered. The views of students, parents, teachers, and administrators were compared and contrasted within each school. Data were then combined by respondent group and the responses of administrators from all schools were compared and

contrasted. Then the responses of teachers from all schools were compared and contrasted. The same pattern was followed with parents and with students. Finally, respondent groups were compared across all schools.

Semi-structured interviews were chosen as the primary source of data. This was an exploratory study, and it was hoped that the respondents would take time to think about the questions as they were asked. It was felt that this possibility would be more likely in an interview format where the interviewer could establish rapport and probe for the quality of information sought.

Unobtrusive data was gathered by the investigator through being in the building and around the subjects. Unobtrusive data are not affected by the presence of the investigator and are not created specifically for the purpose of the study. Eisner (1991) suggests looking for documents and artifacts that are "the indirect surrogates for values, expectations, and behaviors that might otherwise be difficult to see and assess" (p. 185). Examples of unobtrusive data gathered were announcements posted in rooms and hallways, posters of upcoming events, graffiti, minutes of meetings of interest, newsletters or other materials sent home, voluntary groupings of students in the cafeteria or halls, the school calendar, policy or other student or parent handbooks, location of teacher workrooms, presence or absence of parent rooms in the school, parent patterns of dropping off and picking up students, school budgets, teacher directives from the office, presence and location of parents in the school building, organized parent meetings, etc.

Informal supplemental interviews were conducted spontaneously with secretaries, custodians, and cafeteria workers present in the school building on the days the interviewer was on site. These interviews tended to be conversations where the investigator explained her purpose for being in the building and solicited any thoughts or information that the informant might have that would be relevant. These conversations were not usually recorded during their occurrence, but were recalled and reported as field notes as soon after they occurred as the investigator had the opportunity to record them.

Subjects, Schools

Schools selected for the study. The principals of several schools were interviewed initially for the purpose of selecting schools for the study. Schools were chosen to be as different as possible on the basis of size of the school, socioeconomic status of the parents, school setting, and current parental involvement at the school. Three schools were chosen. The characteristics of these three schools can be compared using Figure 1.

School A has nearly 2000 students most of whom are from a working class background. It is located in an outlying area of a county containing a metropolitan area. Approximately 72% of the students are white and 28% are black. There is no PTA, but some parents are involved through a parent advisory council and through booster clubs for the various student activities such as band and athletics.

School B is a kindergarten through twelfth grade magnet school with approximately 400 students in the high school. It has an inner city location and students are bused from all over the school district to attend. It is racially, socially, economically, and gender balanced to the district in which it is located. Approximately 60% of the students are white and 40% are black. School B has a high degree of parental involvement in all elements of the school. Eighteen hours of service to the school are required per year for parents with students attending.

School C has just over 1000 students. It is located in an upper class suburban setting from which about 67% of its students come. Some School C students are out of zone. Approximately 29% of the students at School C are bused from the inner city for racial balance. Some of these students live in single family homes and some are from the projects. School C has a small but active PTSO. Most parents are not active in the PTSO. Some parents are involved in the school through booster clubs. Parents of students bused from the inner city are seldom involved in either the booster clubs or the PTSO.

Comparison of School Characteristics

	Size of School (# students)	SES	School Setting	Racial Balance	Current Parental Involvement as Characterized by Principal
School A	1850+	mostly working class	mixed suburban	72% White 28% Black	Has parent advisory committee selected to be representative. They helped to choose this principal, have been advocates for school, started newsletter. Booster clubs. No PTA.
School B	400	mixed, representative of district	inner city, but draws from total district. (Magnet School)	60% White 40% Black, representative of district.	Parents must commit to 18 hours of involvement in school activities and attendance at 2 parent/teacher conferences per year as a condition of their child being admitted.
School C	1250	upper class with lower class	suburban, but Black students are bused from inner city.	71% White 26% Black 3% Asian	Strong involvement of White parents, minimal Black. Active PTSO, open board membership of 20-25, meet monthly, very vocal, raised $10,000. Band boosters raised $30,000. Athletic boosters less active.

Figure 1.

Subjects selected from these schools. All administrators were asked to be interviewed. Most agreed and were scheduled during the school day. Parents, students, and teachers were selected by random drawings at each school. Samples were overdrawn to adjust for scheduling problems and refusals. Subjects were asked to participate in the order drawn until a full complement of subjects were scheduled. Subjects who did not show up for their interview were rescheduled if they were willing. Additional subjects were added from the list when necessary. Most teachers and students who were asked agreed to be interviewed. The student and teacher interviews were conducted at the school on school time or in some cases immediately before or after school. Most parents at School B who were asked readily agreed and were interviewed at their convenience at School B. Several parents from Schools A and C did not respond to the original request for an interview. The written request was followed by a telephoned request. Several parents declined and their places were taken from parents farther down the list who agreed to participate. Parents were interviewed at their convenience at the school or, in the case of inner city parents from School C, in a neighborhood center close to their homes.

Instrumentation and Data Collection

The interview schedule used to gather information was based on the researcher's review of the current research and literature in the field. It incorporated ideas and some direct questions from the Teacher, Parent, and Student Surveys (Spring, 1992) developed and used by Joyce Epstein and Lori Connors at The Johns Hopkins University in the High School and Family Partnership Project. Interview questions were designed to encourage the respondents to express their views about parental involvement at the high school level in general and at their high school in particular, roles which parents could or should play at the school, and how parents were currently involved. Open-ended questions were also included to allow for the gathering of pertinent information not suggested by the remainder of the questions. Some questions specifically asked for responses which would include the first five categories of parental involvement of the Epstein typology (see pages 8-9). Approximately the same questions were adapted for each group of respondents to allow comparisons across groups. In some cases, the interview schedule was not used completely when the respondent expressed personal views and answered the interview questions spontaneously. This happened most often with administrators and with some teachers.

Interviews generally took from thirty-five minutes to an hour. Student interviews took the least amount of time and parent interviews the most. Teacher interviews might have taken more time if there had been more time available. They were usually scheduled during a planning period and ended at the bell. All interviews were tape recorded and later transcribed by the researcher who conducted all the interviews.

Ten parents, ten students, ten teachers, and three administrators were interviewed from School A. Seven parents, nine students, seven teachers, and three administrators were interviewed from School B. Thirteen parents, fourteen students, ten teachers, and four administrators were interviewed from School C. The total number of interviews was one hundred.

Data Analysis

Qualitative methods of data analysis including content analysis were used. Data analysis focused on ways to comprehend a large volume of data and involved the reduction of data through organizing and combining related data as well as selecting the data most pertinent to the study. Various strategies of working with the data including mixing, matching, comparing, fitting together, linking, and constructing hierarchies were combined until the data seemed to fit together. In this study, although the investigator had in mind categories of responses around which she sought data, other categories developed from the data themselves as the study progressed.

To assist in data storage, retrieval, and analysis, generalized word processing and database computer software programs were used. All interviews and field notes were transcribed by the researcher into a word processing program and transferred by units of information to a database program as recommended by Stuck (1989, March) and Martin (1988, April). The data base program helped with data reduction and constant comparison. Fields in the database program were any variables such as the interviewee, the site, date, group to which the interviewee belonged, and codes or categories for analysis. The units of meaning could then be sorted and called up according to need. It was possible to retrieve data on any number or combinations of fields in any order. The original transcriptions of the data were left intact on the disk and the need for multiple photocopies and index cards was eliminated. Software designed specifically for use in analyzing qualitative data was not used.

Findings were compared and contrasted among respondents at each school setting. Data were then combined by respondent group and the responses of all administrators, all teachers, all parents, and all students were compared and contrasted. Data fit together best by individual school. The differences at school sites seemed to exert a strong influence on the views of its constituents. For that reason, the data are reported by school site first and then compared and contrasted across sites by respondent group. The Epstein typology (see pages 8-9) was useful in classifying types of parental involvement and was used in reporting findings at each level.

Results

In analyzing the data from this study, data were combined in three different comparisons. The site seemed to be the most important factor in understanding the views and responses of the subjects. The unique characteristics of each individual school make the school the most significant unit of analysis. Accordingly, for the first comparison, the data were analyzed by each site. As an example, School A teacher, parent, student, and administrator responses were compared to each other. Secondly, data were combined across schools by respondent group while keeping the site location of each response intact with the response. Those results are reported by respondent group following the school site studies. As an example, parent views of parents from Schools A , B, and C are compared and contrasted. Finally, responses were compared among respondent groups across schools. A chart summarizes the comparison of respondent groups across schools. In this final comparison, parent responses from all schools combined are compared to student responses, teacher responses, and administrator responses from across all schools.

The Epstein typology was found to be generic enough to be very useful in classifying parental roles for high school parent involvement and was used as a framework for organization whenever parental roles were compared.

School A Site Study

School A is housed in an eight year old sprawling brick building located in an outlying area of a county containing a metropolitan area. The school system includes all the public schools in the county. A little less than two thousand students attend School A in grades nine through twelve. When the school opened eight years ago, it consolidated the populations of several different predominantly blue collar communities, each of which had had their own rival high schools up until that time. African American students from the metropolitan area were included in the mix as a part of a court mandated desegregation plan. At present, approximately 72 percent of the students are white and 28 percent are African American. Even though all students are provided bus service, parents and students report that many students have after school jobs

and drive their own cars.

The executive principal reports that when the high school was built, there was a lot of resistance not only to the inclusion of the African American students, but also to the consolidation of the separate white communities. Many of the parents at School A report that their main concern is about fighting and threats of violence among students. They mention the combination of the size of the school along with the varied backgrounds of the students now zoned to attend the school as reasons why the problems with fighting and violence persist. Students identifying problems focused on unruliness of fellow students in addition to fighting and the size of the school. Students were more likely to specifically discuss race relations as a problem both among students and between students and teachers. The executive principal stated that although "lack of tolerance for others" is School A's biggest problem, the process of adjusting to the consolidation is proceeding normally and that the feelings expressed by parents and students are just a part of this process. Several of the administrators stressed that they encourage parents to drop in at the school at any time and that they hope that this invitation will help to ease parents' discomfort and unfamiliarity.

In addition to the executive principal, School A has four assistant principals. The decision not to have a PTA was made when the school opened eight years ago. Administrators and teachers felt that PTAs were not very active in high schools and not worth the effort. Most of the parental involvement occurs through parents giving support to student activities through booster groups for activities such as band and athletics.

About three years ago, a parents advisory committee was established. Participation has been by invitation of the principal. An effort is made to include parents from the various community factions represented by the student body and to balance the committee in terms of parents of students from each grade level. The current superintendent of schools used input from this committee in selecting the executive principal for her job. The committee functions in an advisory capacity in trying to identify problems at the school. They have also performed an advocacy function with the school board in trying to push for improvements they felt were needed. The executive principal reported that she has asked them for input. She said, "I don't think parents should be involved in the everyday types of things, but I think that the parents should let the administrators know what kinds of things they want, what kinds of things they don't want, what works and what doesn't work, and have a dialogue, and then leave the school people to carry them out. I'm pretty well satisfied with the role of our advisory committee. Some of the things they've asked me have cost money. And I haven't been able to do those things. But if it hasn't been a barrier like money, then I have tried to do it." None of the parents interviewed were members of the committee and none of the students interviewed said their parents were on the committee.

The executive principal would like to increase parents being supportive of their high school students in the form of parents encouraging their teens to take part in school activities; supporting the teachers in the educational process; attending activities that the teen is involved in; and providing transportation so that the teen can take part in school activities. Through providing this kind of support to the teenager, she feels that the parents should be able to keep up with what is going on in the life and the development of their child.

Currently the school communicates to the parents through information sheets sent home about four times a year with a calendar of upcoming events and telling the parents the expectations of the school and when report cards come out. Report cards are sent out every six weeks and progress reports are sent home by teachers mid way through the marking period when students are in trouble academically. Parents are called if their child is absent from school without an excuse. The executive principal acknowledges that "we do have parents who want to be kept up to date on a weekly basis on how their children are doing, but that's not feasible time wise or financially, and it's not the direction that we ought to be going as far as trying to teach these young people maturity. We're in a process of trying to wean the parents from having such tight control. In elementary school, they need to know more. In college, parents are notified twice a semester, and that's it. And that means that the <u>children</u> ought to know when they're not doing well, and parents don't need to hover over high school children as

far as their grades are concerned."

According to the executive principal, it would be a great benefit to the school if parents were involved in volunteer capacities at the school. Individual teachers ask for and receive occasional help from parents on a one time basis with projects relating to areas of the parents' expertise. The executive principal would welcome clerical help as well as parents to supervise hallways and the lunchroom to free up secretaries and the five teachers now assigned to these tasks if the parents were willing to go through a training period and then work regularly.

Comparison of the views of parents, students, and teachers at School A

(Type I) Basic Obligations of Parents

Parents and students agreed on many ways that parents are currently fulfilling their basic obligations. Both mentioned parents telling students how important school is. Parents said they check report card grades and the students agreed. Parents and students concurred that parents often ask about homework and may help with homework. Providing transportation was another way parents are involved. In addition, several students appreciated parents supporting the decisions students make and for "being there for me."

Teachers mentioned proportionally fewer ways that parents are currently involved. Their comments concentrated more on reasons why parents are not involved. There were many individual teacher comments that fell in this category. Several teachers noted that once kids are in high school, the family members go their different ways and do not see each other as much and consequently are not as close. Both parents working once their children were in high school or the mother going back to work were two reasons mentioned by students, parents, and teachers as to why parents were less involved.

All three respondent groups noted that as the child takes on more responsibility, parents think the high school child is "old enough to handle it." Students, parents, and teachers all had the feeling that some parents turned over too much responsibility to the child. Another common thread was that communication between parent and teenager is more difficult. Parents found it harder to know what is going on in the life of their high schoolers. Students felt parents should "listen to them in case they need help," and parents said, "It's harder to communicate the older they get."

When asked how parents should be involved, students' replies concentrated around the parent keeping track of them, encouraging them, and showing support. Teachers also wanted parents to show support by "being there" for their children and supporting the activities the children were in. Teachers additionally wished parents would show stronger support for academics by "wanting their child to do better," "giving their children a sense of appreciation for education," and "encouraging them to respect authority, especially the teachers' authority." In addition, several teachers thought parents should "talk to their children about sex and drugs," "be more involved in their children's lives," "give encouragement rather than punishment when the child has failures," "set limits," "provide love for their child," and "get up to see their children off in the morning."

(Type 2) Basic Obligations of Schools

Any comment which was made by a student, parent, or teacher about communication between school and home or home and school was recorded in this category. Report cards and progress reports were most often named by School A parents as ways the school communicates with them. Students also mentioned report cards fairly often. The only other ways that more than one parent mentioned receiving information were letters from the school or from individual teachers, and the child giving the parent a message about what was going on at school. Students seemed convinced that the school would call their parents if they were having a major problem. They also mentioned that the school sends home newsletters and notes with them about

things that are going on at the school. Students felt that teachers wanted them to talk to their parents about what was going on in class, and some students mentioned that announcements were made over the intercom about which they were supposed to tell their parents.

Teachers were aware of far more efforts by the school or by teachers to communicate with parents. They listed information sheets at the beginning of the year with class expectations, newsletters or calendars, phone calls when a change in the child's behavior or academic progress is needed, and the Lesson Line. The only two parents who spoke of the Lesson Line complained that the messages were out of date. Parent-teacher conferences, grade cards and progress reports, putting announcements and/or comments on report cards, and grade level offices calling the parent about student absences were also mentioned by teachers as efforts made to communicate with parents.

The most frequent reason given by teachers for why the school fails to communicate with parents was that students do not always take home the notices the school sends. Students agreed that they do not always give their parents messages from the school.

Parents strongly expressed the desire for more communication from the school. They want more complete information about school work and their child's progress. Many parents named the newsletter as a good way of communicating what is going on at the school. For personal communication, several said the telephone call was the preferred mode.

(Type 3) Parental Involvement at the School

School A parents agreed that they should be involved at the school. Parents said they attend student performances and conferences with teachers. Teachers made more comments about parental involvement at the school than did either parents or students. Teachers noted parental involvement in booster clubs, parents as guest speakers in classes, and parents coming to the school for meetings about problems the students were having.

Teachers also listed several ways that administrators or teachers try to involve parents. Several commented that the principal welcomes parents to come inside the school building and to visit their child's classes as well as to come to open house and to the parent conference day and asks every year for volunteers to "do things." All teachers said parents are welcome to come to the school. Most parents said they feel welcome, but do not feel that the school makes an effort to try to get them involved. Many said they would do volunteer work if asked. Some hesitated to say they would do this volunteer work at the school because they were not sure how their child would feel about them being there. Others said their children wanted them to be involved. Most students said their parents were involved about the right amount. Others said they would like for their parents to be more involved. No students said they wanted their parents to be less involved. Coming to the activities they were in was the most commonly mentioned way that students wanted their parents to be involved.

A few parents said they were more involved now that their children were in high school. Reasons given had to do with the parents feeling needed to support the activities that their children were in. Most parents as well as students and teachers agreed that parents tend to be less involved at the high school level. Reasons cited were varied. Teachers and students did not see ready roles for parents of high schoolers to play. Parents observed that the large size of the school and the fact that it was not a community school contributed to their being less involved. Some parents said that they did not have a way to be involved because their children were not involved in any activities.

Teachers thought that parents being busier contributed to their being less involved. They saw both parents working or the mother taking on a more demanding job as more common once the child was in high school. Several teachers thought that parents just did not want to be involved. Some teachers said they do not have time to involve parents, and because academics are more specialized at this level, it is harder to find something for parents to do.

(Type 4) Parental Involvement in Learning Activities at Home

Parents, students, and teachers at School A made fewer comments in the category of parental involvement in learning activities at home than in any other category. All students said their parents have helped them with homework. Several parents said they often cannot help with the homework assigned and each named a particular subject in which they felt inadequate. Several teachers commented that in their subject, parents were generally unable to help their children. Students noted that their parents pushed them to do their work and felt that parents should check their kids' grades and check that their kids were doing their homework. Teachers wished that parents were more involved in wanting their child to do better in their academics. Few teachers and no parents or students were aware of teacher assignments that were made to specifically involve parents at School A. Teachers noted that they did not have time to involve parents and that parents were generally too busy to help their children in learning activities at home. Parents and students generally thought it would be a good idea if teachers would occasionally make assignments involving parents with their children.

(Type 5) Parental Involvement in Governance and Advocacy

At School A, a few students and parents and several teachers mentioned the parent teacher advisory council as an example of parents being involved in governance and advocacy. Not many knew how parents could become members of the council. All respondents could envision parents being involved in advocacy for their own child, but few parents reported being involved in governance or advocacy of any kind at the school. Comments as to why this was so ranged from not seeing any need to be involved to not feeling that being involved would do any good. Students agreed that if their parents were concerned about an issue at the high school that they probably would become involved. But most of the students did not see any current concerns serious enough to make this happen. One teacher would like for parents to be more involved in keeping watch on the school system by "demanding to know how money is used," but did not think that parents keeping watch on what is happening at the individual school would be very useful.

School B Site Study

School B is located in an old brick school building in the downtown area of a medium sized city. The building is well maintained inside and out. What green area is available around the building is landscaped. Although bus service is provided for all students, many parents reported that they transport their children to and from School B. A few high school students drive.

School B is a K-12 magnet school created to help the school system avoid forced busing for integration. It's "magnet" is that it is a Paideia school. School B draws students from the zones of each of the remaining schools in the school district. It opened in 1986 and has grown in popularity with parents. Rather than basing admission on academic standards, applications are received on a first come, first served basis stratified by the home school zone of the student. This procedure typically results in parents camping out in front of the board building preceding the day for submitting applications to assure their children a place near the top of the waiting list. The parents of prospective students agree to attend all parent-teacher conferences and to perform two hours of volunteer service for the school every month (eighteen hours per year.) In addition, students applying for the 4-12 grade openings are interviewed concerning their motivation for learning. This admissions procedure coupled with the popularity of the school contributes to the student body being very representative of the students in the district as a whole. About 52% of the students are white, 45% are African American, and 3% are Asian American. The school is also gender balanced.

The Paideia influence results in a strongly academic one-track curriculum. It is the philosophy of the school that with motivation to learn and with adequate opportunity, all students can master the most difficult subjects. Parents said these high expectations and the

emphasis on academic success and opportunity to learn are what attracted them to the school.

Approximately four hundred students are enrolled in grades 9-12. One head principal and three assistant principals serve grades 6-12. Each principal also teaches at least one class. There is also a full time volunteer coordinator for K-12th grades. Hers is a professional non-teaching position. The school gave up one teaching position to hire the volunteer coordinator.

For this study, the volunteer coordinator, the 6th-12th grade head principal, and the 10th-12th grade assistant principal were interviewed. All students and parents of students interviewed were from grades 9-12. Teachers interviewed taught at least one high school class.

The expectation that parents and students will be partners with teachers in the educational process ran through the interviews with administrators and teachers as well as parents and students. Trust was specifically mentioned by several respondents as being a part of the culture of the school. The requirement of "volunteer hours" legitimizes the parents' presence in and around the school. In addition, parents want their children to be at this school because they know and agree with the educational goals and have high educational expectations for their children. They are kept informed of their child's progress through regularly scheduled parent-teacher-student conferences. According to the parent volunteer coordinator, parental involvement in this setting is much more than giving volunteer hours to the school. "The essential thing about parent involvement is not <u>what</u> you do, it is that you <u>do</u>. 'Parental involvement' is exactly that. There's really no substitute for it. And it's not about how much work you can get done for the school. That's a byproduct."

The amount that parents were involved differed from parent to parent and student to student. A common theme was that teenagers generally thought their parents were involved "about the right amount," no matter what that amount was. A few said that they would like their parents to be more involved, and one student would like less involvement. Many parents were happy with their current amount of involvement. Teachers also expressed satisfaction with parental involvement and support.

Communication at School B is a two way street. The school makes a strong effort to keep parents informed using both formal and informal means. When parents are at the school, they have more opportunity to see what is going on and to talk with school personnel about concerns. The regularly scheduled parent-teacher-student conferences give parents a formal opportunity to discuss their child's progress whether or not the child has problems. Teachers reported that parents also take responsibility for getting in touch with teachers when they have a concern either about their child or about any aspect of the school program. The PTSA includes parents with students in all grades at School B with the most active participation from the parents whose children are in the lower grades. The PTSA raises funds to support school programs. PTSA meetings take a variety of forms, but are usually not well attended. The PTSA mails home a newsletter monthly which gives announcements, announces upcoming events and deadlines, tells about what is happening in several of the classes, and has a large section from the parent involvement office which details upcoming work opportunities for parents to fulfill their required volunteer hours.

Parents, students, and teachers all seem fairly satisfied with School B. Several members of each respondent group said that there were no serious problems at the school. Some respondents expressed concerns that the school was experiencing "growing pains" and that it was hard to maintain the philosophy of the Paideia Proposal in practice. Deterioration of the older building and the lack of some needed facilities were also common concerns. Students brought up more problems than any other group and they went into more detail concerning those problems. Interpersonal relationships were the focus of the major student concerns expressed with several African American students detailing problems in race relations between teachers and students. Several teachers expressed concern over student motivation.

What was <u>not</u> said by the respondents can also be informative in explaining the views of stakeholders at School B. Students were not personally worried about other students who were "getting away" with unacceptable behavior. Instead, they seemed to view unacceptable behavior as the purview of the student involved. Teachers did not seem to be critical of parents for turning over too much responsibility to the teenagers and not supporting their children.

Teachers did not complain that parents are not supportive of them or of education in general. Teachers were not fearful of parents becoming too involved and did not suggest that limits should be placed on the kinds of parental involvement that are encouraged except for matters of confidentiality. Parents did not complain about not knowing what goes on at the school or that the school did not keep them informed. Parents did not express a lack of confidence in teachers or the education their children are receiving. They also did not complain that teachers do not care. Respondents did not express a fear for the physical safety of students nor worry about the safety of their belongings. They did not feel that the school was overwhelmed by problems that they could do little about. Rather, they seemed to feel that problems could and would be handled through the cooperation of parents, students, and teachers.

Comparison of the views of parents, students, and teachers at School B

(Type I) Basic Obligations of Parents

At School B, student and parents made many more comments about the basic obligations of parents than teachers did. Many had to do with parents stressing the importance of education and encouraging academic effort. Most students said that their parents do and should talk to them about school. Two thirds of the students report scheduling their own time. Students gave varied but specific examples of how their parents encourage them to succeed in school. School B parents seem to have found several successful ways to encourage academic achievement.

Students made many comments concerning the importance of grades. All students agreed that their parents ask about grades, encourage good grades, and that parents ought to express concern about grades. Parents did not stress grades in their responses to the extent that students did. Teachers did not specifically mention grades, but said that parental expectations about the importance of education should be communicated to the high schoolers.

Some respondents from each group specifically commented on the good communication between students and their parents. Several parents said that they discuss problems with their teenagers, but at the initiative of the teenagers. Students agreed that parents should know what is happening in their child's life. Most said that parents gave them feedback and advice and generally were available to help with problems.

Respondents generally did not make spontaneous comments about parents providing physical support. No respondents mentioned students holding down after-school jobs.

(Type 2) Basic Obligations of Schools

At School B, most respondents considered the efforts of the school to keep parents informed about what is happening at the school and about the progress of students as commendable. The parent-teacher-student conference was the most frequently reported means of communication by all respondents. Teachers called it "one of our highest priorities." Parents appreciated the opportunity provided by the conference format to get direct personalized feedback from the teachers about their child's progress. Several parents mentioned that the conferences extend the opportunity to talk with the teachers to the parents of children who are not necessarily having problems in school. Students expressed the opinion that it was only right that they be included in the conferences since it involved them directly. Some members of each respondent group suggested having the conferences more often.

Report cards and progress reports were mentioned by some members of each group as a means of communication. From the number of comments made, students seem to place the most importance on report cards and teachers the least. Most parents and students and many of the teachers spoke of the newsletter as a good means of general communication from the school. Teachers and parents both noted that phone calls between teachers and parents were commonly used to discuss individual problems. Open House and information sheets about course expectations were given by teachers as examples of communication.

From the comments recorded, communication at School B seems to be as much of an attitude as a practice. Students said their parents are always welcome at the school and parents echo that view. Students accepted part of the responsibility for keeping their parents informed. They agreed that teachers encourage them to discuss school with their parents. Several parents mentioned that they know some of the school personnel personally. Parents said they feel a part of the school. "You walk in and the teachers speak to you." "If you come in to get your kid out of school, there is no hassle about why you have to do this. It's civil like that so you feel more inclined to be at ease when you come in." "The school is good about letting me know when there is a problem." "You hear good things about your child from the teachers too. It's a good balance." "When I try to contact a teacher, they always call back or write a note or something." Students felt respected too. When asked if the school would contact their parents if they were having a problem at school, they insisted that teachers generally would communicate with the student first and only if that did not work would the parents be called.

Teachers felt that parents at School B expect teachers to call or send notes home about any problem. Two teachers volunteered that they give their home telephone numbers to their students and parents. Another teacher explained, "It's understood that no child will reach the end of the quarter with a failing or a poor mark and their parent had never been contacted. We are strongly encouraged to make it a point that you keep up not only with your assessment of the child's progress so you're not waiting until the end of the quarter to realize that they are in trouble, but also that when you notice something to get in touch with the parent."

(Type 3) Parental Involvement at the School

Parents, students, and teachers agreed that parents are always welcome at the school. Several teachers explained that compared to other high schools, School B parents have more ownership of the school and of the educational process and tend to come to the school more frequently. Although all groups said that parents do not actually visit the classroom very often, they agreed that the opportunity was available.

Students specifically said that they thought parents should be involved. There appeared to be a wide range of how much parents actually come to the school. Several comments were made about parents who put in far more than their required number of volunteer hours. Most students thought their parents were involved about the right amount, no matter how much that amount was. Only one student thought her parents were too involved. A few students wanted their parents to be more involved.

Most parents said they attend activities at the school. Teenagers were unanimous in wanting parents to attend their activities. Only one parent interviewed reported being very involved in PTSA.

The most obvious way that parents reported being involved in the school building at School B was the required "volunteer" hours. All groups spoke positively of the required volunteer hours, and parents were the most positive. Positive aspects of working at the school named by more than one parent included getting to know the teachers better, getting to know the friends of their own children better, meeting other parents, being able to demonstrate by example to the child that the parent sees the child's education as important enough to invest time and energy in it, learning what the atmosphere of the school is like, knowing what is going on at the school, and being better able to talk to their child about school. Teachers expressed gratitude for the work of parents. Several commented that they are able to spend more time on actually planning and implementing lessons because parents take some of the busy work from their work load.

All groups were able to enumerate varied ways that parents fulfill their required hours. Many jobs are listed in the volunteer office, but parents themselves often notice a job that needs to be done and do it. Even though most people interviewed commented on the ease of putting in the volunteer hours, teachers and the volunteer coordinator reported that some parents have to be pushed to get their hours in. Most parents whose child has been at School B several years said the kinds of volunteer work they do now is often further removed from the direct contact with their child that they used to experience. Several parents expressed a sensitivity to the

possibility that their kids might want them to do their volunteer hours "at a further distance."

(Type 4) Parental Involvement in Learning Activities at Home

At School B, all three groups made fewer comments in this category than any other. All students said their parents were willing to help them with assigned homework and most believed that parents should help in this way. Some students and parents said students usually do not need help with homework and others reported that students have "gone past" what their parents are able to help with. Some parents named a particular subject in which they could not help. Several teachers agreed that some parents do not feel competent in helping their children with homework. Two students said their parents had hired tutors for them.

About half the teachers reported they have made assignments requiring parent cooperation or involvement. Most parents reported helping with such an assignment, but that those kinds of assignments were less common at the high school level. Parents and students generally thought it would be beneficial if teachers would occasionally such assignments. Two students also suggested that assignments involving their grandparents would be fun.

(Type 5) Parental Involvement in Governance and Advocacy

Grade level meetings were named by some parents, students, and teachers as one means used by School B to formally solicit parental input. PTSA was also mentioned as a vehicle for parents to express concerns. Most respondents stressed, however, that at School B, formal procedures to involve parents in the governance and advocacy at the school are less necessary because of the feeling by all respondent groups that the education of students is a joint endeavor, a partnership. Parents commented that the school expected their feedback and acted on it.

The culture of School B seemed to be well-defined in the minds of all three respondent groups. Throughout the interviews, a lot of comments were made that reflected positively on the atmosphere or the quality of school life within the school. The picture of the school that emerged was a place where there is mutual trust and respect among parents, teachers, and students. The "we-they" outlook common in many high schools is replaced by an inter-dependence and a spirit of cooperation. Most members of all three respondent groups could articulate and agreed with the philosophy and/or the goals of the school. Several members of each group mentioned the Paideia Proposal by name in explaining the culture of the school. Many students commented that their parents had chosen this school for them because the parents agreed with the philosophy.

Several teachers were aware of instances where parents had tried to exert influence at the central office or school board level on behalf of School B and its programs. This had apparently occurred when the parents felt that the philosophy or program of the school had to be protected or when it was felt that School B was not getting the support it needed to solve a problem or when there was a problem with the equitable distribution of resources.

School C Site Study

School C is located in a country club suburban setting but the facility is old and poorly maintained. School C is reportedly "toward the top of the list" in the school district and will be completely renovated when funds become available. In the mean time, no money is being spent for upkeep.

The attendance zone for School C was realigned in 1980 as a part of a court mandated desegregation plan. The zone includes the several upper and middle class neighborhoods close to the school and extends to the county line in two directions. The rural areas out toward the county lines are lower middle class to poor and include some quite remote enclaves. A noncontiguous lower class inner city area including both a housing project and single family dwellings is also included in the attendance zone for School C, and most of the school's African

American students are bused from this area. Approximately 30% of the students are African American. From the inner city neighborhood, it is about a fifteen minute bus ride to School A. Students bused from the rural areas of the county have a longer bus ride.

Just over one thousand students attend School C. There are three assistant principals and the head principal. All students are provided bus service, but some students drive. The students in this attendance zone, including the students from the inner city, have attended schools together since elementary school.

Parents, students, and teachers at School C expressed concerns about discipline, attendance, and race relations. The deteriorating condition of the school building was also an issue. Parents were especially concerned about fights at the school that they learned of through their teenagers. Many students thought that the numbers of students skipping school and cutting classes was a bigger problem. African American students were the most troubled by race relations. Teachers were additionally concerned about a lack of a feeling of community and cohesion among students and among staff. White parents pointed out that some parents in their community are afraid to send their children to this school and send them to private schools instead. The interviewed parents were satisfied with their decision to remain with the public schools. Assistant principals agreed that the reputation of the school was sometimes lacking, and they encourage parents to be in the school building just so that they will know what really goes on there. School C has a strong academic program. According to guidance department reports, 90% of School C graduates go on to some type of higher education. Advanced Placement courses are in place and many students test out of those courses for college credit.

Parents are involved at School C in a variety of ways. Parents attend athletic events, concerts, and other events in which their teens are involved. Booster clubs raise funds in the thousands of dollars for these activities. There is a small but active PTSO which raised around $11,000 this past year to fund requests from teachers for supplies and equipment for their classrooms. The PTSO also puts out the newsletter that is mailed to parents several times a year. PTSO members were included on the committee that selected the new principal. The PTSO board is not representative of the variety of students who attend School C. The majority of School C's parents interviewed for this study indicated that they had never attended a PTSO meeting and several comments were made indicating that the PTSO was exclusive. Students either did not mention PTSO or said that their parents did not attend. Two parents interviewed happened to be PTSO officers and/or officers-elect. They reported that PTSO meetings are held monthly but few people other than the PTSO board attend. The PTSO also sponsored the "back to school" night in the fall. One officer said that the PTSO had tried to include African American parents from the inner city neighborhoods by offering to provide transportation for them to attend meetings, but she admitted that she did not think they really felt included. Later in the interview, she expressed the opinion that parents from that neighborhood were less concerned about their children and education.

The administrators of School C reported that the African American students and their parents are less involved in school activities. The administrators see this as a concern and would like to try to improve the participation and feelings of inclusion of these students and their parents.

The head principal of School C sees one of the goals of the schools as students becoming more independent learners and thinks parents should not be involved in the learning process. He would like volunteers to perform other tasks at the school, however. This principal was in his first year at School C and readily admitted that he did not have a clear picture of what form parental involvement should take.

The school depends on the PTSO newsletter to communicate to parents. The newsletter is usually several pages long and is mailed to parents several times a year. In addition to the newsletter, report cards are sent home every six weeks and progress reports are sent by individual teachers mid way through the marking period when there is a problem.

Comparison of the views of parents, students, and teachers at School C

(Type I) Basic Obligations of Parents

At School C, a large number of comments fell in the category of basic obligations of parents. Parents and students made more statements concerning how parents are involved while teachers' comments focused on reasons why parents are less involved and how parents could or should be more involved.

From the responses of parents and students, it was apparent that there is a wide variance in the amount of support that parents give students. One student reported virtually no involvement of his parent in his education. Other students named a variety of ways that parents do provide for their physical needs from supplying money for school activities to providing transportation and cooking their meals.

Communication about school is usually initiated by the parents. Almost all parents and students spoke of parents telling students how important school is, discussing which classes the student should take next year, discussing report card grades, asking about homework and telling students to study. Parents seemed aware that students did not all need the same amount of structure and encouragement. Parents are reported by both students and parents to encourage scholastic effort by equating better jobs with school success. Several students reported negative consequences that parents enforce for less satisfactory grades.

Several students appreciated parents for supporting them and for "being there for me." Most students, particularly African American students, did not want their parents' help in working out problems with other students, but said that they really do want their parents' help and support in problems with teachers or administrators. When queried as to how else their parents should be involved, several African American students indicated that parents should be good role models while letting the teens know they loved them and cared about them.

White students expressed a desire for support from parents but conditioned their request with concerns that the parent would try to control the situation. Parents reported various ways that they provide this support often coupled with encouragement, and many seemed sensitive to their teens' need for more independence. Some parents worried about their teen's progress toward maturity. Several parents commented that their teens thwarted their efforts at keeping in touch by not discussing problems with them, not bringing report cards home, and not volunteering information about school in general. When asked, many parents thought it would be helpful if the school would have informative programs for parents about teen problems.

Teachers mentioned proportionally fewer ways that parents were currently involved, and concentrated more on reasons why parents were not involved and also on how parents could or should be involved. There were many individual teacher comments that fell in this category. The most commonly mentioned theme had to do with parents abdicating their responsibilities by turning over too much responsibility to the teenager. Another common theme of why teachers thought parents were less involved was that more parents work once their children are older, and parents are just busier.

The suggestions made by teachers as to how parents could or should be involved could be summarized as the parents providing a stable home life, structure, responsibilities, support, and encouragement. Several teachers wished that families would try harder to raise teenagers' self esteem. Others said the most important thing for parents to do is just to be concerned, let the children know that they are supportive of them. Kinds of structure that teachers hoped that parents would provide included knowing when report cards are due and making sure that they see them, knowing who their teens "hang out" with, teaching study skills, designating a study time and a bed time, limiting TV time, and giving the teenager set responsibilities.

Teacher comments over the total interview did not seem particularly negative, but statements made within this category were more negative. There seemed to be a set of students and their parents that teachers were most concerned about, and the kind of involvement that the teachers thought would be most helpful for these students fell in this category of basic obligations of parents.

(Type 2) Basic Obligations of Schools

Newsletters, notices, and information sheets were most often named by School C parents, students, and teachers as the way the school communicates with parents. Students and teachers also mentioned report cards and progress reports fairly often while parents mentioned these reports less often.

Teachers placed a lot of importance on calling parents as a means of personal communication about less than satisfactory student progress. Students seemed convinced that their parents would be called only if there was a big problem. Teachers reported that their colleagues make fewer calls than they do.

Parents strongly expressed the desire for more communication from the school. Parents from the inner city especially felt it is the school's responsibility to let them know immediately if there is any problem of any kind. Parents whose children never get in trouble said they do not hear from the school. Parents who report having taken the initiative in communicating with the school agreed that their experience was positive. Most parents said they felt welcome at the school.

Parents and teachers also referred to Open House and scheduled parent-teacher conferences. Most students wanted to be included in parent-teacher conferences. Students felt that teachers encouraged them to tell their parents about what was going on in classes, but students did not report that they made this effort. Parents generally agreed that their teenagers do not tell them much about what is happening at school. Teachers suggested that teens regularly intercept report cards and notes from the school and this action was confirmed by some of the students interviewed. Teachers and administrators admitted that they often mail such notes in personal rather than school envelopes so that the notes will not be intercepted.

(Type 3) Parental Involvement at the School

School C parents, students, and teachers overwhelming agreed that parents should be involved in the education of their teenager. The number of ways that parents, students, and teachers report that parents are involved at the school is limited. Participation at the school reported by African American parents was even more limited. The most frequently mentioned way parents are involved was as booster club members through the activities of the teenagers and attending performances that the teens are in. Another purpose commonly mentioned by parents for coming to school was to attend Open House and parent-teacher conferences. A few parents individually have done work for the school on a one-time basis.

Several students and teachers had difficulty envisioning roles for parents at the high school. Parents generally concurred that they were less involved now that their children were in high school, but the majority of parents said that the reasons they are less involved related to not being asked to do anything and not knowing how to be involved. Several parents and students suggested that the school needed to ask and keep asking for help with specific jobs that they wanted done. Parents also reported that they are busier than they were when their children were younger. The most common teacher view of why parents are less involved is that high schoolers do not want their parents involved. A few parents also wondered aloud whether or not their children would welcome their presence. Student comments on the subject varied from student to student as to how much school contact they would welcome with their parents. None of the student views would preclude parental involvement at the school altogether.

Some teachers worried that parents might feel ill at ease at the school. They also wondered if lack of transportation might keep inner city parents from coming. Inner city parents expressed hesitance to drive to the school at night.

When asked for suggestions of what parents could or should do at the school, some members of all three groups of respondents specified attendance at scheduled parent-teacher conferences, Open House, and student activities at school. Others would have parents physically present at the school when no specific invitation was issued. Parents would just drop in.

Some respondents in each group could see a role for parents in helping to improve the

physical plant of the school. Several teachers suggested that parents be involved at the school doing secretarial work or work that would lighten the teacher work load.

(Type 4) Parental Involvement in Learning Activities at Home

All three groups of respondents at School C made fewer comments regarding parental involvement in learning activities at home than the preceding three categories. Most students said their parents had helped them with homework and they all thought parents should help with homework when asked. Parents report asking about homework and helping sometimes. Several parents report frustration in trying to help saying they often cannot help with the homework assigned in a particular subject. Many parents said that their children did not seem to have much homework to do. A few parents said their teens did not want their help. Some teachers thought that parents should check up on students to see that homework is done or that tests are studied for.

Many teachers felt that it would not be feasible with their subject area to ask parents to help with an assignment. Some thought that parents would not cooperate if they made such an assignment. Most students said they had not been assigned to do any work with their parents' help this year. Parents and students generally agreed it would be fun if teachers would occasionally make assignments which would involve the parents with their children.

No learning activities initiated by parents at home were detailed by any of the respondents.

(Type 5) Parental Involvement in Governance and Advocacy

At School C, a few students, parents, and teachers were aware that some parents had been on a committee that helped to select the new principal and mentioned this as an example of parents being involved in governance and advocacy. Most did not know how parents became a part of the committee. All respondents could relate to parents being involved in advocacy for their own child. Several students said their parents would only become involved if an issue involved the child personally. Parents, students, and teachers were of the opinion that the administration was open to parental concerns. Other than PTSO officers, few of the parents interviewed reported being involved or wanting to be involved in governance or advocacy of any kind other than intervention in behalf of their child at the school. Some parents said that parents are basically satisfied with this school and do not feel the need to get involved.

Several teachers equated parental involvement in governance and advocacy with site based management and some expressed reservations about the process. Others looked more favorably on the possibility and could see parents as allies and advocates for the school.

Parent Views Combined Across Schools

Parents from all three schools agreed that parents should be involved in their teenagers' education. They concurred that parents should know what is going on in their teen's life, support the teen both physically and emotionally, and give guidance to the teen. Parents reported talking about school with their teenagers, especially about grades, report cards, homework, and ways to improve. They said they often talk with their teen about how important it is to get a good education. While they try to encourage self reliance and independence, they indicated that they do help with problems when asked and provide guidance.

Parents acknowledged that they feel welcome at the school. Those who report being involved at Schools A and C do most of their work for the school through booster clubs of their children's activities. These booster clubs raise thousands of dollars which go to supplement school programs. School A does not have a parent teacher organization. Most parents in Schools B and C were not involved in their parent teacher organization. Parent teacher organizations in Schools B and C raised funds and also put out the school newsletters and sponsored such activities as Open House. Parents responded favorably to these activities of the parent teacher

organizations without making the connection to the organization. Parents alsc reported attending activities, contests, and performances of students at the school, both that their children were in and also that their children were not in. Only the parents at School B reported spending much time at the school doing volunteer activities. Many parents at Schools A and C would like to be involved in activities at the school, but reported that they are not asked and do not know how to be involved. In order for them to become more involved, they suggested that the school would need to tell them on a regular basis about a variety of specific jobs that needed to be done and let the parents choose those they were interested in or felt they had a special talent for and could fit into their schedule. Parents commented that they are busier now than when their children were in elementary school because they have taken on more responsibilities such as a job. They are also trying to back away and let their teenager take on more responsibility, and some parents said that their teenagers try to shut them out of their lives by not communicating with them. Parents seemed to want to be sensitive to their teens wishes, and if the teenagers would prefer them not to be around at the school building, the parents would accede to their teen's wishes. Other parents said that their teens would like for them to be more involved, and some parents reported that their teens had been through a stage in their development when they wanted their parents to stay out of their lives but had now progressed past that phase. Most parents would welcome the opportunity to attend programs on teen problems at the school.

Most parents said they would become an advocate for their child if a clear problem developed with the school. They did not see the parent teacher association as a viable conduit for working out problems. Parents in School B declared that they are partners with teachers, administrators, and their own teens in the teens' education. They were aware of the goals of the school and they buy into those goals. They saw it as a part of their responsibility to make suggestions to the administration if they see problems at the school. They felt that they could be a part of the solution to any problems which came up. Trust and a sense of community were mentioned as factors by several parents at School B. Parents in Schools A and C did not report feelings of community and partnership. They said it is unlikely that they would become involved unless school problems affected their child personally.

Parents had the least to say about being involved in learning activities at home. They reportedly help with homework when asked and when they are able. Parents reported that teachers make few assignments which require their cooperation. Parents would be receptive to such assignments occasionally.

Student Views Combined Across Schools

Students interviewed stated without exception that parents should be involved in their child's education. A phrase used often was that parents should "be there for you." To these teens, "being there for you" indicates that the parents support the teens rather than controlling their every move. Parents would give feedback, advice, and help with problems when asked. They would attend activities their teens were involved in and be proud of them. They would encourage the teenagers more and criticize them less. The teens wanted the freedom to make mistakes. To the teenagers interviewed, the parent "being there" for their child was the most important kind of parental involvement.

Some teens wanted their parents to be more involved than they are at present. Most thought their parents were involved "about the right amount" no matter what that amount was. Many knew of other teens whose parents are not involved enough, who have abdicated their responsibilities as parents. Teens reported that their parents talk to them about school, especially about grades and homework and how important school is. Students said their parents should help them with homework and that parents do try to help when asked, but are often incapable of helping. Students said teachers did not often make assignments which they were supposed to do with their parents. Most teens reported that it is their responsibility to set their own schedule to get school work and household chores done, but that parents may encourage

them to set the right priorities with negative rewards for poor grades. Some teens thought that their parents should do volunteer work at the school, but only students in School B said that their parents did. Many students said that if their parents worked at the school, it should be in a capacity that did not put them in direct contact with their teenager. Students in Schools A and C did not have clear ideas about what roles their parents should play if they were to do work at the school. Some teens in all schools reported parents worked to raise funds with booster clubs.

Most teenagers thought that their teachers would call their parents if there was a serious problem with the teen at school. Teens also thought that they should be included in parent-teacher conferences. They acknowledged that teachers encourage them to talk to their parents about what is going on at the school and in their classes. Schools communicate with their parents via report cards, progress reports, newsletters, and in the case of School B, through parent-teacher-student conferences. Students in Schools A and C told of students intercepting mail and calls from the school in order to keep their parents from knowing what was going on. Students said that their parents are welcome to come to the school at any time, but in Schools A and C, parents being at the building is usually equated with the student being in trouble. Students at School B said that their parents are expected to provide input to solve school problems. Students at Schools A and C did not see their parents as school problem solvers unless the problem involved them personally. In that case, they believed that their parents would be their advocates.

Teacher Views Combined Across Schools

Teachers agreed with parents and students that parents should be involved in the education of their child. The phrase "being there for the child" was also used by teachers. Knowing what was going on in the child's life was an important part of "being there" for the child as was support. Supporting the child's activities through attendance at contests and performances was stressed. Teachers added the emphasis on providing a stable home life as a part of "being there" for the child. Teachers also wanted parents to have academic goals and expectations for their child and communicate to the child the importance of school.

Teachers articulated different ways that parents are currently involved. Most teachers mentioned organizations such as booster clubs for the activities that the teenagers are in. They also noted that some parents come to games, even if their teen is not involved. Teachers cited parent teacher organization involvement as an additional way that they see parents involved, but parents and students overwhelmingly said that parents were not involved in parent teacher organizations. Teachers at School B all specified numerous ways that parents are involved in giving service hours to the school, but this form of involvement was mentioned by very few teachers in Schools A and C except for individual parents filling unique one-time roles. Teachers would like for parents to be involved doing service work for the school. Jobs they could see parents doing are the kinds of work that would lighten their teaching load such as secretarial work, phoning, running copies, and following up on attendance. Teachers suggested that parents could easily help to improve the physical plant of the school by painting, landscaping, etc. Teachers from School B were in agreement that parents are and should be involved in governance and advocacy roles. Teachers from Schools A and C disagreed among themselves on this point. Teachers from all three schools reported that parents were on the committees which helped to select their current principals.

Teachers cited many reasons why parents might be less involved at the high school level. They suggested that parents are busier once their children get in high school because more parents are working and there are more one parent families. Many implied that students at the high school level are less anxious to have their parents around. Teachers at Schools A and C lamented that students are responsible for notes and report cards not always getting home to the parents and that parents do not keep track of when report cards are due so they can ask for them. Teachers also were aware that parents sometimes are unable to help with homework. Teachers stated that they seldom make assignments which would require the student to get the help of a

parent, and they admitted that they were not aware of good ways to involve parents. Many teachers said that involving parents was harder in the subject they taught, and this comment came from teachers that taught a wide variety of subjects. Many teachers thought inservice training in how to involve parents might be helpful for some teachers, but along with this statement came negative comments about inservice education in general.

Many teachers thought there were ways that parents could be involved at their school if the parents wanted to be. They particularly mentioned parent teacher organizations and volunteer work. They said that parents were welcome at the school and in their classroom anytime, but that parents do not often come. To communicate with individual parents, teachers found calling them on the phone the best way. Scheduling parent-teacher conferences when needed was also reported. Open House or the Back to School night, introductory letters from the teacher at the beginning of the year concerning grading and course requirements, progress reports, report cards, and newsletters were reported as standard practice.

Administrator Views Combined Across Schools

Administrators at all three schools said that parental involvement is important and necessary at the high school level. Some administrators at Schools A and C questioned whether or not parents want to be involved. The reasons most often cited as to why parents might not want to be involved were factors beyond control of the school. The location of the school and transportation problems and the parent feeling uncomfortable in the school environment because they had not had a positive experience when they were in school were suggested. One administrator at School A hinted at some teacher resistance to parental involvement. Another reason detailed by administrators at Schools A and C as to why parents are less involved is that because children are maturing and are involved in separating from their parents, parents should and do give them more responsibility for their own education. Typical administrator comments included, "I don't think it's a lack of caring. It's simply time they leave the nest." "Involvement for high school parents is to support their children, encourage them to get involved in other activities and encourage them to study hard." "Some of our students are already legally adults." Administrators at all three schools agreed that students need a different kind of supervision at the high school level. Parents' help is no longer needed in the classrooms for supervision. One School B administrator suggested that parents can still be useful in the classroom for extra stimulation where the parent functions as an additional adult with whom students can interact on a mature basis.

One way that parents were currently involved in the high schools was strongly supported and encouraged by all administrators. Schools A, B, and C all have parents involved through the activities of their teens. The activity is the focus through which parents and teens interact. Parents may actually join a booster club for the activity. The student is in control of whether or not this kind of involvement is open to the parent because the teen chooses whether or not to be involved in the activity. Parents see the teen in the teen's own environment as they work to support the activity. It speaks negatively to the child if the parent does not attend and support their activities.

Administrators at Schools A and C suggested that students may not want parents to be involved at the school. School B administrators said that some students prefer their parents to be involved in ways that keep them from being in contact with the student, but noted that many other teens are quite happy and proud when the parents are in the building and will bring friends by to meet their parents.

Administrators in Schools A and C complained that students thwart their attempts to communicate with parents by intercepting suspension slips and report cards and giving incorrect home addresses. School B administrators did not mention this problem. Schools A and C also said that parental involvement is curtailed by parents being busy and not having time to help. This did not seem to be an overly limiting factor for School B.

School A and C administrators were not able to envision many additional ways to involve

large numbers of parents. School B finds that parents at the high school level often volunteer to do more specialized things, to use their areas of expertise when they see a problem with which they could help. The parent involvement coordinator at school B insists that parental involvement at the high school level is an attitude rather than a list of potential roles.

Administrators, more than any other group, suggested the need for parent education as a type of parental involvement. They felt that there are parents who just do not know how to parent teenagers. Administrators from all three schools named programs that had been held at their schools to help parents deal with teen problems or just to help the parents to be more effective.

School A administrators mentioned ways that parents are and should be providing for their teen's physical needs and stressed the importance of report cards and discussing report cards with the high schoolers. Administrators from both Schools A and C would like more support from parents in reinforcing what the school is trying to do. A variety of ways of supplying this support were suggested.

Administrators from each school were able to name volunteer work that parents either perform for the school presently or that they would like to see parents doing. At all schools, secretarial or clerical help was suggested. One-shot projects that made use of the parent's expertise were enumerated. By requiring from parents eighteen hours of volunteer time per year and by having a full time volunteer coordinator, School B is far ahead of the other schools in the amount of work parents actually do for the school. School B administrators feel the biggest advantage of parents performing this service is not the actual work that they do, but that they are in the school and can see how the school works and what the school environment of their child is. This leads to their being more involved in all other aspects of the school.

Among each school's efforts to communicate with parents were newsletters, report cards and progress reports, and personal contact with the parent by the teacher through phone calls, notes, and conferences. Administrators at all schools stressed that they welcome parents to drop in at the building any time, and Schools A and C administrators said that they wished parents would come more often. They proposed that parents who drop in could visit classes, eat lunch with their child, walk through the halls, and chat with teachers and administrators. School B administrators reported that parents do those things.

Administrators from each school recognized the importance of parent-teacher conferences. For some administrators, such conferences were primarily important when there is a problem, but all administrators from School B consider conferences with all parents and students a top priority.

Administrators from Schools B and C would like to increase attendance and involvement in their parent teacher organization. School A has opted not to have a PTA, but gets feedback from parents via a parent advisory committee. School C depends on its PTSO for feedback. School B uses informal means with parents freely giving frequent feedback to teachers and administrators.

Administrators were not aware of many assignments being made by teachers which utilize parent cooperation and few comments concerning parents helping with homework were made.

More comments concerning parental involvement in governance and advocacy were made by administrators than by any other group of respondents. Schools A and B made more comments that did School C administrators. School A administrators all spoke positively of the parent advisory committee but disagreed among themselves as to the desirability of other modes of parental input. One of the School A administrators would turn the disciplinary procedure over to an elected representative committee of parents who would function as judge and jury. This same assistant principal suggested that the most important volunteer roles parents could play would be for them to monitor the halls and the lunchroom. Other examples given by this administrator of parents being involved in governance and advocacy were accompanied by negative comments about parents challenging the authority and judgment of administrators and teachers. One of his comments was, "Angry parents are usually the ones I see." The other administrators at School A did not see parents being involved in governance and advocacy in such a negative light. School B encourages and utilizes parental feedback and suggestions through

open communication practices and by including parents on committees formed to make the governance decisions at the school. They use shared decision making rather than site based management. School C made the fewest comments. The only formal way for parents to have input currently is through PTSO, and at School C, that organization is rather exclusively upper class white parents. Assistant administrators at School C made negative comments concerning site based management and including parents in either policy making or hiring and firing. They suggest making clear what the limitations would be of any parent group which was to be included in any kind of governance.

Respondent Groups Compared Across All Schools

By combining all teachers and all administrators and all parents and all students, much of the richness of the data and the influence of each school's unique characteristics drops out. Only the very strongest patterns remain. Statements become very general and their meaning loses its context. As an example, almost all respondents in each group at each school said that parents should be involved in high schools. What the respondents mean by this statement is not clear at this level of analysis. Another generalization drawn at this level of data analysis is that teachers at all schools believe there are many ways for parents to be involved at their school. Only School B parents and students agreed. Parents and students at schools A and C said that parents do not know how to be involved.

The combined views of teachers, parents, students, and administrators concerning appropriate roles for parental involvement in high schools were compared using the Epstein typology as a framework for organization. The views are summarized in Figure 2. An X in a column indicates that a majority of respondents in each school expressed this view. When the views were expressed by respondents at fewer schools, the letters of those schools are given.

Discussion

In this study, the culture and climate of the individual school as it related to parental involvement had more influence on the views of parents, students, teachers, and administrators than did any other factor. While high school differences such as the school's size, distance from parents' home, subject areas being more difficult, and students being responsible to more different teachers can be barriers to parental involvement from the standpoint of these high school parents, these barriers have been overcome and parents have been made to feel a part of the high school environment and a partner in the educational experience of their teenager at School B. School B affirms at the high school level the Epstein (1990) research that what the school and teachers do has more influence on parental involvement than do external factors such as the age of the child, race, parent education, family size, or parents' marital status.

School B has all the components (see page 4 in the literature review) of a good parental program in place with the possible exception of documentation and evaluation. They do have documentation of their parent volunteer hours, but no form of evaluation of the various kinds of parental involvement that take place. (A site study of School B using the data from this report has been sent to School B and will provide some evaluative information for them.)

The interviews from School B also contain evidence of the presence of each of the advantages and benefits of parental involvement listed in the literature review (on pages 2-3). Parental involvement at School B is an important part of the total school culture, but it would be difficult to say that parental involvement was the part of the school culture that contributed most to those benefits. It would seem fair to attribute those advantages listed under "Parents" to parental involvement at School B.

PATTERNS OF ROLES STRESSED FOR PARENTS BY RESPONDENT GROUP

	Parents	Students	Admin.	Teachers
The Basic Obligations of Parents (Type 1)				
Parents should:				
know what is going on in teen's life.	X	X		X
provide physical support.	X	X	X	
provide emotional support.	X	X		
encourage independence, maturity, self reliance.	X	X		
encourage academic effort.	X	X	X	X
provide a stable home life.			X	
learn how to parent teens (attend parent education).			X	
The Basic Obligations of Schools, Communications (Type 2)				
The school should:				
let parents know if there is a problem.	X	A,C	X	X
send out report cards, progress reports.	A,C	X	X	A,C
send out newsletters.	X	X	X	X
have parent-teacher conferences.	B,C	B,C	B	B,C
Students sometimes intercept school messages.		A,C	C	A,C
Parental Involvement at the School (Type 3)				
Parents should:				
drop in at the school.			X	X
do volunteer work for the school.	X	X	X	X
support teen participation in activities through attendance.	X	X	X	X
Parental Involvement in Learning Activities at Home (Type 4)				
Parents should help with homework.	X	X		
Parental Involvement in Governance and Advocacy (Type 5)				
Parents should:				
advocate for their child with the school.	X	X		
take part in decision-making.			B, A* (*limited)	B
Parents should attend PTA.			B,C	B,C
Parents are not interested in PTA.	X	X		

Figure 2

Schools A and C do not have any of the recommended components in place. Although each do have some parental involvement, in each school, opportunities are limited and the number of parents involved is limited.

Though most of the differences and similarities in respondents' views of parental involvement are dependent on the school culture, some comparisons can be made by respondent group across schools to previous parental involvement research. High school teachers in this study advocated more parental involvement as do teachers in general. High school teachers and administrators in this study said they would welcome parental presence in their buildings and in their classrooms. Some high school teachers in Schools A and C also expressed low expectations and negative attitudes toward low income students and their parents. Some parents also expressed this attitude. Very few high school teachers in this study reported having parents helping in their classrooms. As in studies of elementary parental involvement, many teachers reported communicating with parents about problems with student progress, but most parents did not report having been contacted. High school parents, teachers, students, and administrators stressed report cards as an important form of communication from school to home.

As in elementary schools, parents reported not being asked to help out at the school or to be involved. High school parents stressed feeling that education is important and wanted to be better informed and more involved. Some parents reported feeling the need to be involved more now that their children were in high school because high school "counted" and was more important. High school parents in this study did not express the desire to know how to help with academics at home. They did admit that they cannot always help with homework and they often had a particular subject with which they reported being unable to help.

Administrators at all three high schools in this study had been chosen for their jobs with the input of parents on the selection committee. Administrators at School A encourage parent involvement in government and advocacy through the parent advisory council. The council provides some unsolicited suggestions about ways to improve the school. On other issues, feedback is solicited by the administration. The administration controls access by choosing the members of the council. At School B, parents are involved in decision-making at all levels through membership on committees. Feedback is actively solicited both formally and informally and is always welcome. There is an attitude of openness and partnership. Administrators at School C are not in agreement with each other concerning parental involvement in governance and advocacy roles. The assistant principals see parents in adversarial roles. Parents who support the school through PTSO are seen as wanting more control and worrying about the wrong issues. The head principal is as yet undecided about what governance and advocacy roles parents should play. High school parents at Schools A and C not already involved through the parent advisory council at School A or the PTSO at School C did not express the desire to be involved in decision-making at the school.

Teacher and administrator comments at Schools A and C focused more on why parents were less involved than did parent and student comments. Most of the factors they named were beyond their control such as the location and size of the school and parents being less able to help with high school subjects. Parents and students were more likely to say that the school does not provide opportunities for parents to be involved and does not ask for parental involvement.

Although some teens did admit to discouraging their parents from being involved by intercepting communications from the school and not wanting their parents to come to school, all teenagers generally said they want parents to support them and "be there" for them. There are some problems they specifically want their parents to help with such as difficulties with teachers or the school. Many students said they would welcome their parents being more involved. Some do not want their parents to be obvious in the school building, but others would not mind their parents' presence and still others said they would be proud to have their parents come to the school. Students think parents should support the child in school activities especially through attendance at their performances and athletic competitions. Some teens temper their invitation for their parents to be more involved by wanting parents to respect their need for independence. They would not want their parents to try to exert control over

their school life, but only to support them. Support is the operant word and is interchangeable with "being there" for the child. "Support" and "being there" came up over and over again in students' conversations about how they wanted their parents to be involved.

Conclusions

1. Is there evidence that the advantages and benefits attributed to parental involvement at the elementary level hold true for parental involvement in high schools? (See advantages in the literature review on pages 2-3.)

All but two of the advantages listed in the literature review were supported by comments made by respondents in high schools in this study. No comments in any of the interviews contradicted any of the identified advantages and benefits. There were minimal comments to support parents gaining improved self concept and about parent education programs contributing to the stability of the home. Most of the comments which supported the advantages were made by respondents at School B where parental involvement is firmly a part of the total philosophy of the school. It would be impossible to separate the results of the parental involvement at School B from the rest of the culture of the school to attribute the advantages identified to the parental involvement rather than some other part of the program.

2. How do or should the roles parents play at the elementary level change with the increasing maturity and independence of teenagers at the high school level? Is the Epstein typology useful for categorizing parental involvement at the high school level?

The Epstein typology was helpful as an organizing framework in examining roles and potential roles for parental involvement in high schools. The categories are generalized enough that although the specific roles for parents of high schoolers might change, they were still easily classified using the typology.

In the category of basic obligations of parents, parents recognize that their teens have differing needs for independence and support and some parents report finding it difficult to determine what balance to strike. Parents worry that their teens are not taking school seriously enough and try to impress upon them the importance of a good education. Parents are at least as concerned and maybe more concerned about their children doing well in high school because high school "counts" more than elementary school. Most parents seem willing to provide support in ways that it is clear to them that their teen needs support, but at the same time, they try to let the teen have as much responsibility and independence as they can handle. The students that teachers are the most worried about are the ones teachers think have been given too much independence and not enough guidance and support. Administrators too worry about parents who do not know how to parent teenagers. Most parents said they would welcome the opportunity to attend programs at the school aimed at helping them recognize and deal with teen problems.

In the category of basic obligations of schools, parents in Schools A and C think it is especially important that the schools communicate with them whenever there is a problem with their teen because their teens communicate with them less about problems. Parents find it harder to know what is going on in the lives of their teenagers so that they can provide the support needed. Parents and teens at School B report that they have more open communication with each other and better communication with the school. School B parents feel they are a part of the school and know what is going on in the school. Report cards are important forms of communication for all parents because parents understand them and can count on them. Parents are also very appreciative of a regular newsletter which keeps them informed about happenings

at the school.

In the category of parental involvement at the school, many parents said they would be willing to do volunteer work for the school but are never asked. Parents acknowledged that they are busier now that their children are teenagers, but they said if the school would let them know of specific jobs that needed to be done and they could fit them into their schedule, they would still be able to help out. Parents at School B are all involved doing volunteer work for the school in some form and they report that the school makes it easy to find meaningful things to do that fit into their schedule. Some parents are reported to put in hundreds of hours of volunteer time, far in excess of the required eighteen hours. Some parents in all schools are quite active in parent booster groups supporting the activities that their teens are in. Parents whose teens are not in any activities do not have the opportunity to be so involved. Both parents and teachers realize that direct parental assistance in the classroom is needed less at the high school level. Parents are also wary of infringing on their teens' space at the school and want to be sensitive to their teens' need for independence.

Fewer parents are involved in learning activities at home with their children once the children are in high school. None of the studied schools stress this kind of parental involvement. Many parents felt they were unable to help with schoolwork because the subjects were more difficult. They report being asked to help less by teachers and by their teenagers. They would be willing if they knew how to help.

Few high school parents at Schools A and C are involved in governance and advocacy. Parents would be an active advocate for their child if there were some difficulty with the school, but do not generally report being interested in governance and advocacy unless a problem involves their child personally. Parents at School B said they feel like partners in the education of their teens and take an active if informal part in governance and advocacy at the school through giving feedback and input directly to teachers and administrators. Parents are also involved in many of the committees which are a part of the shared decisionmaking at School B. High school parents at all three schools seem to be less likely to become involved in a parent teacher organization. Most parents in this study did not see that organization as a desirable vehicle for solving school problems.

3. Are the views of high school teachers, administrators, and parents concerning parent involvement different from the reported views of elementary teachers, administrators, and parents?

The views of high school teachers, administrators, and parents concerning parent involvement seem to be more similar to than different from elementary teachers, administrators, and parents. Parents at both levels said they want to be better informed and more involved. Teachers at both levels advocate more parental involvement in general. They report contacting parents by phone mostly when there is a problem, and most parents report never having been contacted. Parents at both levels seem more likely to become involved when the school takes the initiative and provides encouragement for their involvement. Teachers at both levels said they do not know how to involve parents and do not really know what benefits might be expected from including parents as partners in the education of their children. At both levels, some teachers have low expectations and negative attitudes toward low income students and their parents. Roles parents play and could play fit into the same categories in the Epstein typology for both high school and elementary parents.

More elementary teachers than high school teachers reported having parents helping out in their classrooms. Some elementary administrators and teachers disclose that they are uncomfortable with parents being in the building and in their classroom. In this study, high school administrators and teachers pretty much agreed that parents would be welcome and should just drop in any time. They admitted that parents rarely did this, however. Parents of high school students seemed to be less involved in learning activities at home than they were when their children were in elementary school. They reported that there are often times when they cannot help because their teens have "gone past" their abilities. They also reported

teachers are less likely to assign work which requires their assistance. Teachers thought that one of the main reasons parents are less involved at the high school level is that teenagers do not want their parents around.

4. What are teenagers' views about the desirability of their parents' involvement in their schools?

Teens unanimously said that parents should be involved in their education. The kind of involvement most teens saw as most important was parents supporting them or "being there" for them. Teenagers wanted the independence to make decisions on their own, but felt the need of their parents' support and backing when they faced obstacles. They wanted their parents' guidance while feeling that they are in control. Teenagers strongly expressed their desire to have their parents attend their performances at the school. Teens wanted their parents to be proud of them.

It was obvious from talking with these teenagers that there was a wide variance in the amounts their parents were involved. Most teens reported, though, that their parents were involved "about the right amount." They felt their parents were doing what was necessary to support them. Most teens said that their parents do and should give them guidance and talk to them about school.

Many teens wanted to be included in parent-teacher conferences. Students from School B which routinely does include students felt most strongly about being included.

Most teens said they would not mind if their parents helped out at the school. Some would prefer not to have direct contact with their parents at the school building, but for others, this was not a problem. Students at School B where parents are already involved doing volunteer work in the school building were the most positive.

Implications

1. Parental involvement programs are as desirable at the high school level as at the elementary level. With a comprehensive parental program, many of the advantages and benefits of parental involvement at the elementary level are present at the high school level.
2. Teachers and administrators especially but also parents need to be educated as to what those advantages and benefits are in order to consider whether or not they want to expend the time and energy necessary to develop a comprehensive plan. Teachers and administrators need to understand and accept that they will need to take the initiative for parental involvement.
3. One of the most important parts of a parental involvement program would be to provide a wide variety of ways for parents to be involved and to communicate to the parents frequently about these opportunities for involvement. Parents have widely differing needs for involvement. Parent education should probably be one of the options for involvement offered to parents.
4. A comprehensive parental involvement program could contribute positively to school improvement efforts. Parents who are partners in the educational process feel ownership and responsibility to the school. Many become willing workers and may put in much time and energy to improve the school.
5. Each school should apply the recommended components for successful parental involvement programs according to the school's individualistic needs and the beliefs of the stakeholders. Each school is unique and comprehensive parental involvement programs built on the same principles may look very different at different schools.
6. School personnel and parents should not discourage parental involvement based on their belief that students do not want parents to be involved. Among teenagers, there is a lot less

resistance to the idea of parental involvement than is commonly believed. Teenagers specifically want their parents to support them but there is some resistance to parents trying to control students' school experiences. So long as the teenagers feel supported rather than controlled, parents seem to be welcome to be involved.

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